

No. 17.

Price, Five Cents.

SHIELD WEEKLY

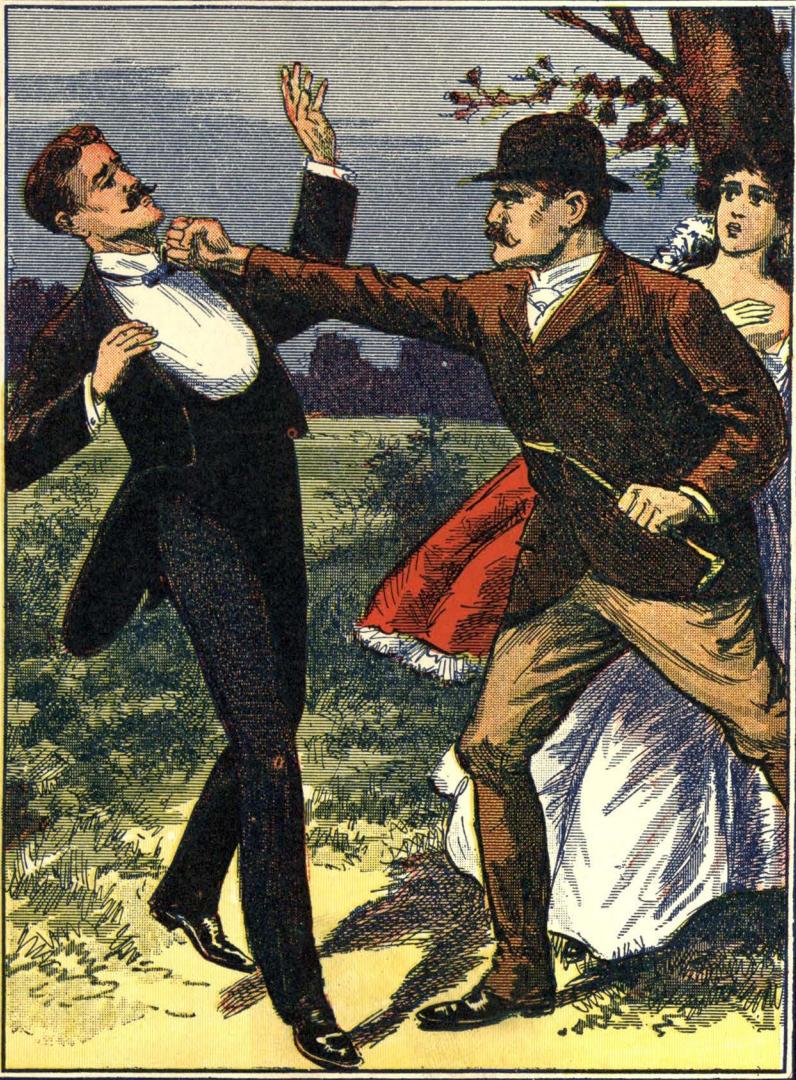
TRUE STORIES FROM
FAMOUS CHIEFS

THE NOTE-BOOKS OF
OF POLICE



FOUND GUILTY

or Steve Manley against Court and Jury
BY ALDEN F. BRADSHAW



SHIELD WEEKLY

TRUE DETECTIVE STORIES • STRANGER THAN FICTION

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No. 17.

NEW YORK, March 30, 1901.

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CHIEF OF DETECTIVES ROGER O'MARA.

The famous Pittsburg detective who figures prominently in SHIELD WEEKLY. Chief O'Mara has solved some of the most mysterious cases on record. The story of one of these will be found in this week's SHIELD WEEKLY, and others will follow.

FOUND GUILTY;

OR,

STEVE MANLEY AGAINST COURT AND JURY.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

STEVE MANLEY DOES HIS DUTY.

"Good gracious, Joe! Look there!"

"Look where, Steve?"

"In front of Waldon's house. Look at the crowd."

"Something has happened."

"The ambulance is there. Look—there comes Chief O'Mara, of the detectives!" cried Steve Manley, excitedly. "A crime has been committed."

"Let's learn what it all means, Steve."

"That's just what I intend to do!"

And Steve Manley quickly remounted his bicycle and wheeled rapidly down the street, closely followed by his companion.

It was about six o'clock on a fine May morning, and these were two bright Pittsburg boys out for an early spin.

Steve Manley was an orphan. He had lost both of his parents in the great Johnstown flood. Though a small lad at that time, he was a manly and self-reliant boy, and at once had resolved to make a mark of his own in the world. He now was fifteen, and for one year had been a clerk in the great glass house of Hall, Spooner & Co.

Like many a youth of his years, he had found much pleasure in reading the best detective stories of the day, and in weigh-

ing for himself the evidence presented, and in wondering what he would have done in like situations. In this way he had become quite a clever analyst, and all who knew him said that very little that was worth seeing escaped Steve Manley's bright eyes.

It is not strange, then, that he immediately felt a lively interest in what he saw so early that May morning; particularly when he beheld the officer who had that moment arrived at the gateway giving ingress to the fine old Waldon residence.

This was an officer whose remarkable astuteness has made his name one of the best known among those of his chosen vocation, whose courage and capability as an officer and superior have rendered him both beloved and respected by his associates and subordinates, and whose long career and brilliant record as a secret service officer have won him distinction the country over.

This was Mr. Roger O'Mara, chief of detectives of the city of Pittsburg.

The Waldon residence stood fifty yards from the street, and was surrounded by beautiful grounds and a park of magnificent elms and beeches.

It had been owned and occupied for years by proud and pompous Robert Waldon, one of the wealthiest Pittsburg bankers.

Adjoining the grounds was the handsome building of the Unity Trust and Deposit Company, of which Waldon was the president. Being considerably removed from the business part of the city, it for convenience was much patronized by the wealthy men and women dwelling in that aristocratic residential district.

As he wheeled nearer, Steve Manley observed that Chief O'Mara was ordering two policemen to clear the grounds of the people who had scaled the iron fence in front; and Steve's inquisitive nature and natural cleverness at once asserted themselves.

Instead of approaching the immediate scene of interest, he turned his flying wheel up the gravel driveway and rode nearly to the house. Then he left the wheel in a clump of lilacs, and started across the grounds toward the officers near the Trust building.

"They'll now think I belong here, and will let me remain," he said to himself, with augmented excitement. "By gracious! there's a man lying on the ground. I'll bet he's dead."

Steve was right.

The man's body had been found only a short time before. He was lying in the Waldon park, and about a rod from the side door near the rear of the Trust building, a door used chiefly by President Waldon in going between his dwelling and the bank.

The dead man was lying on his back, with his bloodless face upturned. He was about forty, and a darkly settled bruise on his neck below the left ear indicated that he had died from a violent blow. He was clad in a light overcoat, partly unbuttoned, showing underneath that he was clad in full evening dress.

As Steve drew nearer, he heard Chief O'Mara demand of one of the policemen:

"Who discovered the body?"

"Patrolman White, sir, while walking by on his beat."

Chief O'Mara glanced toward the sidewalk. The front fence was fully thirty yards distant, and now excluded the curious and interested gathering of men drawn thither despite the early hour.

"Does White know the man?"

"He is Paul Henry, the cashier of the Trust company, chief."

"The man evidently has been dead for some hours. He has been the victim of an assault. Where is President Waldon?"

"I have sent word to him, chief, and expect him out here at any moment."

"And the medical examiner?"

"He has not been notified yet. I had no messenger——"

"The medical examiner is Dr. Gaylord," Steve now cried, impulsively stepping forward. "I will take a message to him, Chief O'Mara, if you want me to. I have my wheel yonder, and can go on the fly."

Chief O'Mara swung round and sharply regarded him. He was a sturdy, well-built youth, large for his years, and with a frank, intelligent face and clear, expressive blue eyes. It was not the first time that Chief O'Mara had seen him.

"Aren't you the youngster who called at headquarters a few months ago and wanted a position on the force?" he demanded, sharply.

"Yes, Chief O'Mara; I am," admitted Steve, blushing slightly.

"What are you doing here so early?"

"I was taking an early ride on my wheel, sir, and was drawn here by seeing the ambulance—and yourself, Chief O'Mara!"

And Steve respectfully touched his cap.

The faintest of smiles changed the line of Chief O'Mara's firm lips. Steve's compliment rather amused him. Perhaps he was favorably impressed by the boy's manly

bearing, however; or, possibly, he saw in all this a coincidence sufficiently significant to warrant what followed.

"What's your name, young man?" he asked, abruptly.

"Stephen Manley, sir."

"Do you know where Dr. Gaylord lives?"

"Very well, sir!" said Steve, promptly. "He once pulled me through a bad fever, and I will never forget his kindness to me."

"Go and tell him what has happened."

"Yes, sir."

"Wait!"

And the powerful and imposing officer approached and gravely laid his hand on Steve's shoulder, and added, in lowered tones:

"There may be a mystery here. You have eyes and brains. You may use them in studying this case, and if they prove to be good for anything I may find a use for you. Go tell Dr. Gaylord to come here at once."

With a quick flush of pride and excitement, Steve thanked him and started off at the top of his speed.

"By gracious!" he said to himself, "that was an invitation to try my hand at detective work. Chief O'Mara wants to see what I am made of, and here's my chance to make a hit with him and get a place on the force. Gee-whiz! but I have hoped for this opportunity for many a day; and now, Steve Manley, if you've really got brains and sand, it's the time for you to show it."

These were Steve's thoughts as he dashed across the park and mounted his wheel.

This was not his first attempt at detective work, as will presently appear; but never before had he had such an opportunity as this. To be thus noticed by Chief O'Mara had been one of his fondest dreams, and now it acted like a spur in the sides of his ambitious hopes.

Steve made his wheel fairly fly until he

arrived at the door of Dr. Gaylord's office on Forbes street, not far from the magnificent Carnegie library.

To his surprise, Dr. Gaylord himself answered his ring.

"Curious he should be up and dressed so early," thought Steve. "Mebbe he's had a patient."

Dr. Gaylord was a fine, powerfully-built man, still in the thirties, and was one of the handsomest and most popular physicians in Pittsburg. He was a bachelor, and rumor had it that he hoped to marry the cultured and beautiful daughter of the proud and wealthy banker, Robert Waldon.

"Hello, Steve!" genially exclaimed the physician, on beholding his caller. "What brings you here so early?"

"Oh, I am always out with the robins, Dr. Gaylord," cried Steve, touching his cap. "You are wanted by Chief O'Mara."

"For what?" inquired Dr. Gaylord, turning slightly pale.

"There's been a dead man found in Mr. Waldon's grounds, near the Trust building. I guess the chief thinks he was murdered."

"Did the chief say he thought so?"

"No, sir; but he looked it," replied Steve. "I told him I'd take a message to you."

"I'll come around there at once."

"And I'll hurry back there and tell him," said Steve, returning to his wheel. "That means it's a case of fly, Dr. Gaylord; for I have been detailed on the affair."

The physician smiled faintly at the youth's enthusiastic remark, but did not give it its full significance. The man's handsome face was very pale that morning, and his heavy eyes indicated a sleepless night; but Steve did not at that time specially observe these signs of mental distress.

Hurrying back to the scene of the crime, Steve now did not leave his wheel so far from the spot where Chief O'Mara and sev-

eral other men were congregated about the dead body of murdered Paul Henry. He already felt quite as if he now was one of Chief O'Mara's force of detectives, and that he would not be excluded from the grounds, nor be denied the privilege of observing the investigations there.

He rode almost to the spot, and sprang from his wheel near a great clump of hydrangeas, which was almost in the middle of the extensive and attractive grounds.

As he dismounted he happened to notice a crumpled piece of paper, which the wind evidently had caught and deposited among the tall plants. It looked so much like a recently-written letter, or note, that Steve paused long enough to reach among the stalks of the plants and get it.

It was merely a brief note, which Steve hurriedly read.

It read as follows:

Wednesday Afternoon, May 12th, 5.30.

MY DARLING HOWARD:

I must see you to-night without fail. Oh, my darling, I am in such trouble and distress. Meet me in our park near the wall of the Trust building at precisely ten o'clock. It will be dark there, and we shall not be seen. I will briefly leave our guests during the reception and steal out of the house to meet you. If you love me, dear Howard, don't fail me! I know you'll not. I know I shall find you awaiting me there. At ten o'clock to-night, sure! Your loving and devoted,

CELIA.

Steve felt his blood move faster when he read this startling missive.

"It was written yesterday afternoon," he muttered, excitedly. "Howard—that's Dr. Gaylord's first name! And this note was written by Celia Waldon. Jumping Jew's harps! the doctor must have met her out here last night, and dropped this note from his pocket."

Steve was by far too clever not to appreciate the full significance of his discovery.

It indicated that the meeting must have occurred; that trouble of some kind had occasioned it; and that Paul Henry, the man

lying dead yonder, was possibly concerned in it, and, perhaps, had met his death as a result.

"I cannot believe that Dr. Gaylord killed him!" muttered Steve, with his earnest countenance grown very pale at the mere thought of such a calamity.

If there was one man in Pittsburg whom Steve really and deeply loved and admired, that man was Dr. Howard Gaylord, to whom he owed his life.

"By jiminy, this puts a fellow in a tough place," he said to himself, after several moments. "If I give this note to Chief O'Mara, it may possibly result in Dr. Gaylord's arrest, and, perhaps, in a trial and conviction. Gee whiz, but I'm getting it right from the shoulder at the very start!"

For a minute or more he stood there undecided.

Then he recalled the words of the great chief of detectives, who had told him he might look into the case. To Steve this was equivalent to imposing upon him a sacred duty, that of using his talents to the best advantage, that of honorably reporting the result. To do less than this would, at the outset, render him false to Chief O'Mara's trust, and false to his own sense of manhood.

"It's tough to throw down a good friend like the doctor," he reasoned, desperately; "but duty is duty in a case like this. I know what I'll do! I'll do the square thing by the chief, and by the doctor, too. I'll not believe Dr. Gaylord killed Paul Henry—no, sir! never! I'll give Chief O'Mara the note; but I'll stand by my faith in the doctor. And I'll see him through the scrape and pull him out of it, if he's in one, though court, jury and all the world believe him guilty. That's what I'll do!"

With which laudable determination Steve thrust the missive into his pocket and hastened to report to Chief O'Mara.

"I delivered your message, sir," he said, touching his cap. "Dr. Gaylord will soon be here."

Chief O'Mara turned from a portly man who now had poined the group near the body, and glanced at Steve's flushed face. The chief had almost forgotten him.

"Oh, all right, my boy!" he said, carelessly; then continued the inquiries he was making.

Steve waited a few moments, and when an opportunity presented itself he plucked the chief by the sleeve.

"Can I see you out to one side for a second, chief?" he asked, softly, with a significant wink of his left eye.

Chief O'Mara frowned slightly; then suddenly recalled his words of a short time before.

"You have not struck a clew as quickly as this, have you?" he demanded, stepping a few paces from the group of men and looking down at Steve's earnest face.

"I just found this note, chief, out in the bushes yonder," said Steve; and, unobserved by the others, he placed in the detective's hand Celia Waldon's missive to Dr. Gaylord.

"But I don't believe that Dr. Gaylord ever did that, sir!" Steve hastened to whisper, pointing toward the lifeless form near by. "On my word, chief, I don't!"

There was something quite pathetic in the boy's earnestness.

Roger O'Mara read the startling missive from beginning to end, and placed the sheet of paper in his pocket. There was a curious expression on his fine, forceful face when he bent his searching eyes on those of the boy.

"Didn't I hear you say that Dr. Gaylord once saved your life?" he demanded, in slow, subdued tones.

"Yes, sir; he did."

"And do you realize what this may cost Dr. Gaylord?"

"Yes, sir; I do," said Steve, turning quite pale. "It may cost him his life, chief; but you told me to look into the affair, and duty is duty in a case of this kind. I mean to stick by the doctor, sir; but it was my duty, just the same, to turn the letter over to you."

Chief O'Mara's face did not change, but his voice fell several degrees.

"What do you say your name is?" he asked, still with that curious expression in his dark eyes.

"Stephen Manley, sir."

"Very well, Stephen Manley! I want you to say nothing to any one about this letter."

"I'll be as dumb as an oyster, chief!" exclaimed Steve.

"And at noon to-day you come to my office at the police headquarters. I want to see you."

"I will do so, sir. And—and may I continue looking into the case, sir?"

"By all means!" said Chief O'Mara, smiling oddly. "And report your observations to me."

"By gracious!" cried Steve to himself, as the chief turned away; "it's come at last, and I've made a hit!"

CHAPTER II.

GROUNDS FOR SUSPICION.

Chief O'Mara, without remarking upon what had passed between him and Steve Manley, turned again to the portly person with whom he had been conversing.

"You say, Mr. Waldon, that you have found things all right in the Trust Building?" he said, inquiringly.

"Perfectly so, Mr. O'Mara," replied Robert Waldon, a corpulent, gray-haired man of fifty, with a decidedly severe cast of countenance. "The vault is locked as usual, and nothing appears to have been disturbed."

"Were you in bed when informed of this tragedy?"

"Naturally, sir, at six in the morning. I at once arose, however, and came out here. At your suggestion I have been into the bank; but, as I have said, there appears to be nothing wrong in there."

"Yet you left Paul Henry there late yesterday afternoon, I understand?"

"Yes, that is a fact," replied Waldon, drawing up his portly figure. "I left the bank about half-past five, and Mr. Henry, the cashier, was then busy upon the books, it being near the end of our fiscal year. I know it was his intention, so he said, to remain at work a portion of the evening, which I presume he did. He remarked to me when I left the bank, that he should work until about ten, and would then come over to my house."

"Did he have a key to that side door of the bank?"

"Yes, sir."

"One might naturally infer, then, that he was assaulted immediately after leaving the building?"

"That seems to be a very reasonable inference, sir."

"Was he alone when you left him?"

"He was, and the street doors of the bank were closed and locked."

"Did you lock the side door when you departed?"

"I did. Mr. Henry had a key of his own, and he requested me to lock the door when I went out."

"Had you been having any special talk with him, Mr. Waldon, that you remained so late at the bank yesterday afternoon?"

"As a matter of fact, Chief O'Mara, I had," replied Waldon, coloring slightly.

"May I know of what nature?" inquired the chief, regarding him rather sharply.

"There is no reason for not telling," was the quick reply. "I took the occasion to invite Mr. Henry to become my son-in-law, by marrying my daughter Celia. We discussed the project for some little time before I left."

"Was this project agreeable to Mr. Henry?"

"Decidedly so!" exclaimed Waldon, much as if he thought such a question entirely needless.

"And to your daughter?"

"My daughter would have been governed by my wisdom and wishes in such a matter, sir," returned the banker, with some austerity.

"Do you feel quite sure of that, sir?" quietly asked Chief O'Mara, recalling the letter Steve fortunately had found.

"I think I should know my own flesh and blood, sir!" exclaimed the banker, with added warmth. "Yes, I feel sure of it. I gave my daughter to understand only yesterday afternoon, that, unless she consented to this marriage, I should cut off her inheritance."

"May I ask why you were so resolved upon this marriage?"

"Because Mr. Henry was a man of means and integrity, and it was to my daughter's advantage."

"Has it not been intimated, Mr. Waldon, that your daughter and Dr. Gaylord——"

"I know nothing about my daughter's relations with Dr. Gaylord, and care less about them, Chief O'Mara," Waldon now cried, with much vehemence. "Dr. Gaylord has been denied my house for more than a year. My daughter shall never marry him with my consent, and, if she weds him without it, she will have ceased to be regarded as my daughter. Enough of this, sir! I do not care to discuss my family affairs above the dead body of a murdered man."

"My questions emanated only from a wish to discover, if it is possible, the motive which may have led to this man's death," Chief O'Mara curtly answered; and, with the evidence already provided by Steve, the chief rather suspected that he had found a possible motive.

Nor was Steve Manley far behind him in this. He had remained near by and had heard the foregoing, and he guessed from the tone of Celia Waldon's letter to Dr. Gaylord, that the banker's daughter had a will of her own, whatever Waldon himself thought. But Steve was not a bit pleased by the fact that this evidence only served further to incriminate the physician who once had done him so great a service.

"Did you see anything of Mr. Henry at your reception, Mr. Waldon?" Chief O'Mara next asked.

"I did not," was the reply. "I do not think that he was there. Among two hundred people, however, he might have been there for a brief time without my observing him."

"Were there many people about these grounds during the evening?"

"There should not have been sir, for I employed a man to prevent intruders from remaining. I presume that he did his duty, and was about here all of the evening."

"Who was the man, Mr. Waldon?"

"A fellow who occasionally does odd jobs for me. His name is Peter Dobbs—ah, there he comes at this moment! Perhaps he can give you some information. I certainly cannot."

Chief O'Mara turned in the direction indicated.

From the rear of the broad estate, the back fence of which adjoined the street parallel to that in front, a tall, curious-looking man was approaching.

He was cheaply clad, wearing a dingy gray suit and a faded brown overcoat. The latter was buttoned closely around his slender figure, and about his neck was wound the voluminous folds of a thick woolen muffler, as if to exclude the sharp air of the early morning.

"Come here, Dobbs!" cried Mr. Waldon,

pompously. "There has been a crime committed and Paul Henry has been murdered. The chief of detectives wishes to learn what you may know about it."

Then the banker reverted to Chief O'Mara and added, softly:

"The fellow is not quite right in his upper story, sir, so make allowance for that. He is perfectly harmless and trustworthy, however."

"Come nearer, Mr. Dobbs," commanded the chief. "What's the matter with you, that you shake so?"

Mr. Dobbs was trembling visibly, and had his hands thrust deep in his coat pockets. His sallow face and inferior countenance bore out the statement of Robert Waldon, that Peter Dobbs was a little lacking aloft.

"I shake because I'm cold, sir," he replied, in a wheezy voice, and with a faint attempt at a smile.

"Cold, Mr. Dobbs, in the month of May!"

"I took cold standing out here in the damp air last night, sir, and have a bad sore throat," Mr. Dobbs now explained. "It's much as I can do to speak out loud."

"Were you about the grounds here all of last evening?"

"Ay, sir, I was."

"Did you see any suspicious person about here, by whom such a crime as this might have been committed?"

"No, sir, not one."

"What were you doing most of the evening?"

"Moving about the grounds, sir, to make sure no strangers came in."

"Were you in this locality a part of the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you saw nobody about here?"

"Not a soul, sir."

"Was it sufficiently light for you to have seen anybody?"

"I might, sir, though 'twas a pretty dark evening," wheezed Mr. Dobbs, doubtfully shaking his frowzy head.

"Was there a light in the Trust building?"

"Yes, sir; I noticed that."

"Do you know about what time it was extinguished?"

"I didn't see it after ten o'clock, sir."

"And you can give me no information that might explain this affair?"

"Only what I've said, sir," wheezed Dobbs, with ingenuous earnestness pictured in his sallow face. "I didn't see anybody, and I don't know anything about it."

"Were you in this part of the grounds after ten o'clock?"

"Only once, sir; and after that I was down near the front gate. The people outside had mostly gone home, so I didn't need to watch out so sharp against strangers coming in. I don't know anything about that, sir!"

And with the last, Mr. Peter Dobbs glanced with a visible shudder at the motionless white figure upon the greensward near by, the mute victim of some man's dreadful passion or deliberate vengeance.

Chief O'Mara was not inclined to doubt the testimony given by this half-witted fellow, whose dubious expression was certainly that of honest simplicity; and, before the chief could frame another question, one of the policemen at his elbow said, softly:

"Here comes the medical examiner, Chief O'Mara. Here comes Dr. Gaylord."

Steve turned sharply about, and saw the physician approaching from the direction of the house. Evidently he first had visited the residence, before coming to the scene of the crime.

"Great Scott! I believe he's been to see Miss Waldon," thought Steve, with dubious misgivings. "He must have known the old man was out here. If things don't take some turn for the better, I fear I have tackled a big job for the sake of the doctor."

Meantime the physician came striding across the lawn, and presently joined the group of men gathered about the lifeless body.

Though very pale, Dr. Gaylord was perfectly composed; and his six feet of brawn and tissue, for he was a noticeably large and muscular man, fairly dwarfed those about him. He did not bestow even a glance upon Banker Waldon; but, with a nod to the chief, he said gravely, with a deeply resonant voice:

"Good morning, Chief O'Mara. What's the trouble here?"

Chief O'Mara received him precisely as if no suspicion existed in his mind.

"A violent death, which I'd like to have you pass upon, Dr. Gaylord," he replied, with a bow. "I wish to order the body removed."

"When was it discovered?"

"Nearly an hour ago."

"Good Heavens, it's Paul Henry!" exclaimed Dr. Gaylord, turning to bend above the remains. "This is shocking! Do you find any evidence explaining such a tragedy?"

"Nothing of consequence as yet. Does the man appear to have been murdered?"

"There is no reasonable doubt of it," said Dr. Gaylord, promptly, while he continued his examination. "His neck has been broken by a terrible blow. It would not ordinarily have happened, but the stroke evidently fell just right to dislocate, if not fracture, the vertebrae. The man was certainly killed by the blow."

"Can you tell with what the blow was delivered?"

"No, I cannot," said Dr. Gaylord. "Although the skin is not broken, the bruise is deep and the blood much settled. It is impossible to say with what he was struck."

"How long would you say he had been dead?"

"Since some time last evening."

"A definite hour would be preferable, doctor, if you can state one," said Chief O'Mara, with his searching dark eyes never leaving the physician's face.

"It cannot be precisely determined," rejoined Dr. Gaylord, without a change of voice or countenance. "But I would say the man was killed about ten o'clock last night."

Steve Manley fairly caught his breath, he was so surprised.

"If Gaylord really knows anything about this, he's putting up an awful bold front," thought he.

"Will you perform an autopsy, Dr. Gaylord?" asked Chief O'Mara, even more gravely.

"It undoubtedly will be necessary, and I will have Dr. Purcell aid me," replied Gaylord, now rising to his feet. "Have the body removed to Undertaker Talbot's, and I will attend to the matter to-day."

"Can you state anything more at present, Dr. Gaylord?" inquired Chief O'Mara, without the slightest sign of what was passing in his mind.

Dr. Gaylord looked him squarely in the eye, and calmly answered:

"No; nothing more at present! The man undoubtedly died from the blow he received. It remains for you, Chief O'Mara, to discover who delivered the blow. I will give you my report of the autopsy a little later."

And without another word, and with scarce an inquiry relative to the tragic affair, Dr. Gaylord turned sharp on his heel and walked away.

Chief O'Mara smiled faintly, and signed for the officers near by to remove the body to the ambulance.

CHAPTER III.

AN INQUISITIVE RUFFIAN.

"I say, kid! who wos de guy wid der muf-fler round his pipes?"

Steve started quickly on hearing the above

question addressed to him. He had brought his wheel out to the curbing, and was about to mount and away, when the heavy, rasping voice sounded close behind him.

The ambulance had departed, with Paul Henry's dead body aboard.

Chief O'Mara had entered his light wagon, and with an officer had driven rapidly away.

Portly and pompous Robert Waldon had returned to his dwelling, and Dr. Howard Gaylord had strode sadly out of the grounds and was heading for home.

Even half-witted Peter Dobbs had gone as he had come, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his faded brown coat, and his sore throat bandaged voluminously.

The crowd upon the sidewalk had for the most part dispersed, and only a few of the more morbidly curious remained to stare at the fateful spot of earth on which the dead man had lain.

Among these were two men, evidently companions, and very much alike in style and aspect, one of whom had drawn nearer to Steve when he emerged from the grounds, as if he thought the youth could impart something worth knowing, yet not easily to have been acquired by those who had been forced to remain outside.

Steve turned and looked at his questioner.

He beheld a grim, heavy-visaged man in middle life, with small, gray eyes, and features rendered doubly repulsive by a stiff beard of several days' growth. It was a hard, desperate face, with beetling brows and a hangdog look.

The ruffian was roughly clad, with his woolen shirt half-open at the throat, and exposing a broad, hairy breast; and his left hand was carried in a sling, and thickly bandaged with soiled, blood-besmeared cloths.

Though a more villainous looking ruffian never accosted man or boy, Steve Manley was not the kind who takes back water.

"What did you say?" he demanded, as he looked the man over.

"I said, who wos de guy wid der muffler round his pipes?" repeated the ruffian, with a scowl and a lingo that smacked of the lowest dives.

"Do you mean the dead man?"

"Naw!" growled the fellow, with a scornful oath. "Where's yer eddication? I mean der bloke in der brown snake-skin, him as had his tubes tied up, and his dukes shoved inter his pockets."

"Oh, that was Dobbs!" exclaimed Steve. "He's nobody."

"He looked it!"

"He was only a watchman in the grounds last night."

"He wos a good 'un to have! Couldn't the duffer tell who 'twas put out der covey's light?"

"Put out what light?"

"Him's as was croaked, o' course!" growled the ruffian, quite violently. "Some 'un croaked der bloke, didn't they? What good wos der watchman in der snake-skin, if he didn't twig der job?"

"He evidently wasn't around when it was done," returned Steve, finally grasping at what the ruffian was driving.

"Didn't der fly copper discover nuthin'?"

"I guess not," replied Steve, turning away. "He didn't tell me anything."

"He'd been like to writ it all down for yer, if he had, wouldn't he?"

Steve made no reply to this ungracious retort. He threw his leg over his saddle, and paused for a moment to fix his foot in the toe-clip of his pedal. Then, as the ruffian rejoined his companion, Steve heard him grimly but quietly observe; with a sullen growl:

"She looks like she wos all wool 'an a yard wide, Waddy; an' dat's what comes of a crooked duffer givin' a square gun der chilly mit! Dis ere's der way."

Then Steve started off like the wind, for it was nearly time for him to be at his desk.

He had not ridden a hundred yards, however, when he abruptly slowed down, shot up to the curbing, and again sprang from his wheel.

"Great guns! that was curious, now that I come to think of it!" he exclaimed to himself, looking back up the street.

"Why did that ugly ruffian ask me those questions? Why was he interested in Dobbs, or in what Chief O'Mara had discovered? What did he mean by a crooked duffer giving a square gun the chilly mit? And what brought two such fellows to this part of the city at this hour in the day?"

Looking up the street, Steve again located the two men.

They were swaggering moderately in his direction, the man with the injured hand a little in advance.

"I'll take time to see where they go, by gracious, if nothing more," Steve suddenly decided, so impressed was he by the occurrence.

He ran his wheel to the next corner, on which a bicycle repair-shop was located, and arranged to leave it there until called for. Then he darted across the street and prepared to shadow the two men.

It took him nearly two hours to run them to cover. Before this was accomplished, Steve had decided that both men were more or less strangers in Pittsburg, for their movements indicated that they were not at all familiar with the streets.

But about ten o'clock they halted in front of an inferior wooden hotel in one of the lowest and most disreputable localities along the river front, and after a brief consultation, and a critical survey of the exterior of the house, they evidently decided to locate there.

Steve watched them enter the dingy office and barroom on the street floor. He saw

them bargaining for quarters with a red-headed landlord as rough and uncouth as themselves, and finally sign their names to a dog-eared register. Then the fellow with an injured hand drew quite a wad of bank-notes from his pocket and paid a sum in advance.

"They evidently mean to remain there for a time," decided Steve; "and you may cut off my ears if I don't keep an eye on them."

The bill having been paid, the red-headed man set up a round of drinks on the bar; and presently, at a sign from one, he led them out through a passage at the rear of the bar-room, and up a gloomy flight of stairs.

"They've gone to their room," decided Steve. "I will take a chance to learn their names."

Darting across the street he quickly entered the dive, which was then unoccupied, and hurriedly read the two names scrawled upon the dirty register.

"Bill Rohan."

"Waddy Dumfrie."

These were the two names, and there was no home address attached.

"The one who spoke to me is Rohan," thought Steve. "I heard him call the other one Waddy."

Having fixed the names in his mind, Steve hurriedly left the place without having been observed, and now hastened to report at the office in which he was employed.

At precisely noon that day he appeared at the police headquarters, according to the appointment made, and found Chief O'Mara ready to receive him. He found the noted detective seated at the desk in his private office, and Steve quietly closed the door by which he had entered and respectfully approached him.

Chief O'Mara regarded him with a frown, and demanded, quite sharply:

"Well, my boy, who was that party to

whom you confided the fact that you had found a letter this morning?"

But Steve Manley was not to be caught napping by a ruse of this kind.

"The party was Chief O'Mara," he promptly rejoined, with a quick flash of his blue eyes.

"None other?"

"None other, sir. I'd not begin thus early to disobey orders."

Chief O'Mara smiled gravely and signed for Steve to come nearer.

"I have had a talk with one of your employers, Stephen Manley," he now said, kindly. "He informs me that you are an honest and capable boy, with a tact for detective work. I learned from him that you recently detected a piece of fraudulent work on the part of his cashier, by which was prevented quite a serious defalcation. This is true, is it not?"

"Yes, Chief O'Mara, it is," said Steve, with becoming modesty.

"And you are quite sure that you wish to give up your present vocation, with all its prospects, in order to become a detective?"

"That is just the size of it, Chief O'Mara."

"Do you realize that a detective's work is an uncertain and dangerous one?"

"It is not more uncertain for me than for others, sir, and I do not fear danger," Steve quickly answered.

"That sounds well," smiled the chief. "Have you given the subject serious consideration?"

"I have, sir; and am fully determined."

"Are either of your parents alive?"

"No, sir; they both were drowned in the Johnstown flood."

"Have you no relatives?"

"Only an aunt who lives in California, sir. I never have seen her."

"Have you earned your own living since the death of your parents?"

"No, sir; I was only three years old then. But I have supported myself since I was twelve years old, when my uncle died!"

"That speaks well for you," nodded Chief O'Mara, signing Steve to a chair.

"I have decided," he went on, "to give you a trial in this work in which you seem to have a leaning. Should you find it distasteful later on, or should I find that you are not adapted to the work, I have arranged to have your employer take you back in your present position."

"That was very kind of you, Chief O'Mara," said Steve, gratefully; "but I feel sure of myself in the change."

"Don't be too sure, my lad. Experience will teach you that this business has little to commend it. If you are ready to go to work at once, I shall now consider you one of my working staff."

"I am ready, chief," said Steve, with a quick flash of pride. "I await your orders."

But Chief O'Mara was not ready to issue orders to this enthusiastic young subordinate. He spent considerable time in further questioning Steve, and imparting such instructions as naturally were necessary. It was nearly one o'clock before he broached the actual work upon which Steve was to engage. Then he said, gravely:

"I am going to let you continue looking into the case which came up this morning, young man."

"Very well, Chief O'Mara."

"And in order that I may observe you from a standpoint of my own, I shall for the present let you work in your own way, without giving you explicit instructions. You may investigate this case involving the death of Paul Henry in any way you choose, and report to me when you discover anything you think worth reporting. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"I presume you have discovered nothing further since morning?" smiled Chief O'Mara, with a rather quizzical expression in his grave eyes.

Steve remained silent for a moment, and then decided that he would wait till he was dead sure of something, and not make disclosures upon a mere theory, which might prove groundless.

"Nothing worth reporting, Chief O'Mara," he replied. "But I have ideas of my own, sir, and I hope soon to report something of consequence."

Chief O'Mara laughed. He did not have much faith in this experiment, despite that Steve evidently was a bright lad. Reverting to him after a moment, he asked, gravely:

"Who answered the bell, Steve, when you took my message to Dr. Gaylord?"

"Dr. Gaylord himself, sir."

"Did you find him up and dressed?"

"I did sir, which struck me as being rather odd, since it was barely six o'clock in the morning."

"Did he make any comment when you told him what was wanted?"

"None, sir."

"That is all at present, then," said Chief O'Mara. "Remember what I have told you, and set about your work promptly."

"I am already about it, Chief O'Mara," said Steve, rising. "I shall not forget a word you have said, sir, and I shall make a report as soon as I have one worth submitting."

"You'll find me ready to hear it," the chief kindly rejoined; and then, with a nod, he dismissed the young detective from his office.

CHAPTER IV.

STEVE GETS DOWN TO WORK.

During that day and evening Steve cautiously kept an eye on the two men he had observed that morning, but discovered

nothing to occasion suspicion. Yet the more he thought of them, the more certain he felt that he was on the right track.

On the following morning, however, the Pittsburgh newspapers came out with glaring headlines and the startling announcement that Dr. Howard Gaylord had been arrested for the murder of Paul Henry, and that the evidence against him was so conclusive that bail had been denied him.

Of what this evidence consisted the papers could not state.

The physician himself had positively refused to be interviewed, and the police likewise declined to disclose any facts before the case came into court.

At first the news fell like a wet blanket upon Steve Manley, and he flew to the police headquarters to ask the advice of Chief O'Mara.

The latter smiled at Steve's manifest dismay.

"Yes, Dr. Gaylord has been arrested," he kindly explained; "but that does not necessarily end the investigation. A man's guilt is not established by his arrest. There is some very serious evidence against Dr. Gaylord, and it may be brought out in court to-morrow morning, providing he does not decide to waive a hearing. In that case it will be laid before the grand jury, and if a bill is found against him, he will be held for trial."

"Doesn't Dr. Gaylord deny the charge, Chief O'Mara?" asked Steve, in tones that trembled some despite him.

"Dr. Gaylord refuses to open his mouth one way or the other, and has placed his case entirely in the hands of his lawyer. This arrest, Steve, need not deter you from keeping at work on the case. It results from certain facts learned by my detectives; and, as Dr. Gaylord has refused to make any explanation, his arrest became imperative. You may go into court to-morrow morning and hear what is said."

"In the criminal court, chief?"

"Yes; before Judge Brady. Meantime, if anything turns up to negative the case against the physician, or to incriminate other parties, so much the better."

Steve now began to see the affair in a more hopeful light, and he at once started out upon a plan which he had formed in mind the previous evening.

Half an hour later he rang the bell of a modest wooden dwelling in Bates street, the door of which bore the equally modest name of Dobbs.

His ring was answered by a bright, buxom girl of seventeen, who at once exclaimed:

"Oh, Steve, is it you!"

Steve had been acquainted with her for several years, and she was the sister of Peter Dobbs.

"Yes, Betty, it is I," he replied, entering the house. "And I'm in a peck of trouble."

"You're not alone, Steve!" exclaimed the girl. "So are we!"

"You?" inquired Steve. "What trouble are you in?"

"Peter's missing!"

"Peter missing? Good gracious, I came round here to see him! Missing since when?"

"Since yesterday morning, Steve," Betsy Dobbs explained. "He put on his coat and went out before breakfast, and he hasn't been seen since."

"But I saw him at Mr. Waldon's when the body of Paul Henry was discovered."

"Yes, we know about that, Steve. We heard that he was up there at that time; but he did not come home from there, nor can we learn anything further about him."

"That seems rather strange."

"Nothing of the kind ever occurred before, Steve. We are dreadfully anxious."

"Didn't he say where he was going?"

"Not a word, Steve."

"Well, I wouldn't worry," said Steve, quite absently. "I think he will turn up all right."

He had thrust his hands into his pockets, and was staring straight at the floor, so intense was his sudden train of thought. It seemed mighty strange to him that Peter Dobbs, the watchman at Waldon's that fateful night, should now be mysteriously missing.

"I say, Betty," he suddenly cried, looking up; "you knew Paul Henry, didn't you?"

"I'd ought to!" exclaimed the girl. "I have taken care of his house for more than two years, ever since his mother died."

"Lived alone, didn't he?"

"All alone, Steve. He took his meals out."

"And you've been keeping his house in order?"

"Yes, Steve," replied Betty, wondering at his earnestness.

"How did you get in?"

"With a key, of course. I have been going up there every day for two years to make his bed, and do such housework as was necessary."

"Every day, did you say?"

"Every blessed day, Steve."

"Were you there the day before he was killed?"

"Well, no; not that day, Steve," and the girl now hastened to correct herself. "He told me last Sunday that I needn't come again for a week, as he was thinking of going away, and I wouldn't be needed."

"Then you haven't been up there for four days, Betty?" demanded Steve.

"No, not since Sunday. But what's the matter with you? You act excited."

"Oh, I am not excited; only I'm hit with an idea," said Steve, more calmly. "Betty, have you still got the key to Henry's house?"

"Sure, I have."

"I want to go in there."

"But he might object!" the girl impulsively exclaimed.

"Well, it won't be in this world if he does," Steve quickly rejoined. "So get your hat and come along with me. I must see the inside of Paul Henry's house this very morning."

"Good gracious, Steve, what ails you? Is it so important?"

"Yes, it is!" cried Steve, with added feeling. "You know Dr. Gaylord, Betty?"

"Of course I know him! He's our doctor, and poor Peter just worships the ground Dr. Gaylord walks on. He has done more for Peter, and been kind to him in more ways, than any man in Pittsburg. Peter just would die for Dr. Gaylord, if it were necessary."

Steve's mind was very active just then. He was putting this and that together, and he now felt more than ever certain that he was on a promising trail.

"And that very fact may—— Say! can you keep a secret?" he abruptly broke off to demand.

"That's what I can, Steve, if it's necessary."

"Then I will trust you. The very fact that Peter loves Dr. Gaylord in his simple fashion may explain Peter's sudden absence."

"How so, Steve?"

"Because Dr. Gaylord is suspected of the murder of Paul Henry, and he is now under arrest. Peter was about there that night, and may have seen something he now fears to disclose lest it should harm the physician. But I'll wager he has made a mistake of some kind, for I'll never believe Dr. Gaylord committed this crime. Say, Betty, did Peter know that the doctor was in love with Celia Waldon?"

"Indeed he did! Miss Waldon used to get him to carry her letters to the doctor. Peter knew all about it."

"Take my word for it then, Peter has run away to avoid telling something!" cried Steve, excitedly. "But I'll wager he has

made a blunder of some kind. Get your hat. I must get into Paul Henry's house this very morning."

"Wait a bit!" cried the girl, now both relieved and excited. "I'll keep you waiting but a moment."

As they hurried away upon their mission, Steve further informed her of the work he was now doing, and again bound her to rigid secrecy. He had but little trouble in doing this, however, for Betty Dobbs thought pretty well of Steve Manley.

It was about half-past nine, when they arrived at the door of Paul Henry's house in Bellefield avenue.

"We must look sharp, Betty," said Steve, as the girl produced the key. "The doctor comes into court for a hearing this morning, and I must get down there before it ends."

"As sharp as you like, Steve," replied Betty, opening the door of the rather imposing residence.

"Can you tell if any strangers have been in here?"

"I think quite likely, Steve."

"Look about and see. Go into every room," cried Steve. "Examine every bed. I am going to have a look down cellar."

Leaving the girl to go one way, Steve went the other. He found nothing suspicious in the cellar, nor in the laundry, neither of which seemed to have been recently used.

But in the basement kitchen, to which he next turned, he was more successful. On lifting one of the covers of the somewhat rusted range, an irrepressible cry of exultation broke from his lips. The first thing to meet his searching gaze was quite a collection of soiled, partly-burned rags, besmeared with blood; and which evidently had been ignited and left to burn, the flames having expired because of the exceeding dampness of the unused range and chimney.

"The man with the injured hand!" Steve audibly cried, in the excitement of the mo-

ment. "By gracious! but this is a find worth making."

Carefully removing the charred and soiled bandages, Steve wrapped them in a newspaper and hastened to rejoin Betty in the hall above.

"Well, what have you discovered?" he demanded eagerly, on observing her evident excitement.

"Somebody has been in the house."

"Are you sure?"

"I am that!" cried the girl. "A bed in one of the upper rooms has been slept in."

"Good for you, Betty!"

"And that's not the strangest of it."

"What more?"

"Half of one of the sheets is missing."

"And I know where it has gone!"

"Where, Steve?"

"To make a sling and a bandage for a wounded hand!" cried Steve, exultantly.

"Is the other half left here?"

"It is upstairs on the closet floor."

"Come and we'll get it. I must have that also."

"What's in your bundle?"

"Old bandages, Betty, removed from Rohan's hand when he made new ones torn from the missing sheet," Steve excitedly explained. "I am dead certain now that I am on the right track. Let me alone, Betty, and I'll yet pull the doctor out of his scrape."

But Steve was nearly due for the greatest set-back that he yet had suffered.

Leaving the house with his bundle under his arm, he again cautioned Betty against disclosing anything; and having again been assured of her silence, he hastened to board a car for the court-house two miles away.

CHAPTER V.

FOUND GUILTY.

Contrary to expectations, Dr. Howard Gaylord did not waive a hearing before the court that morning, and the intense interest

of the public in the extraordinary case was satisfied far earlier than most people were expecting.

Before nine o'clock, the hour when the court came in, the great court-room was packed to the very doors, and the corridors and stairways adjoining were rendered quite impassable by the great gathering of curious people. Everybody seemed to be on pins and needles of excitement, and wild to learn what discoveries by Chief O'Mara's detectives could have resulted so speedily in Gaylord's arrest.

At precisely nine o'clock the buzz of excitement was silenced by the vociferous admonition of the court crier, and Judge Brady entered from his private room and took his seat on the bench.

He glanced over the scene with a look of grave surprise; he had seen a crowded court-room before, but never a room in which spectators were packed as close as sardines in a box. Even the bar inclosure was entirely occupied by interested lawyers.

Judge Brady only had taken his seat, when there suddenly arose the tumult of renewed excitement, some features of which attested the popularity of the local physician.

"That's Gaylord!"

"Here comes the physician!"

"There's the doctor!"

These were the declarations whispered by a hundred pairs of excited lips, when a side door near the bench was opened, and Dr. Gaylord was led in by an officer and given a seat near the prisoners' dock.

Dr. Gaylord was very pale, but his bearing was that of perfect composure and impressive dignity. He gave no attention to the dense crowd of spectators; but toward a pale young lady in a seat among the witnesses he bent one grave, encouraging look, then bowed and faintly smiled.

This girl was Celia Waldon, the banker's

daughter, and the heiress whom Paul Henry unexpectedly had, on the very afternoon of his death, been invited to wed.

"Silence in the court!"

Again the loud voice of the crier quelled the noise in the court-room, and in another moment the examination was begun.

It cannot be presented in detail, with all its lights and shades; but, one after another, the witnesses ferreted out by the detectives were called to the stand, and the case against the physician took shape with alarming and resistless significance.

It was shown that, about ten o'clock on the night of the crime, Dr. Gaylord was seen by several to scale the rear fence of the Waldon estate, and cautiously approach the Trust building; and by others that, at about this time, the light in the bank was extinguished, indicating that Paul Henry was about departing. That the cashier must have left by the side door, which opened directly into the Waldon park, also was easily proved, as the front steps were at that time occupied by cabmen awaiting the guests from the Waldon reception.

It was shown that, under these conditions, a meeting between Gaylord and the cashier could hardly have been avoided.

Added to this was the testimony of the detectives to the facts that Dr. Gaylord had positively refused to make any statement as to what had occurred there; and that, instead of personally performing the legally required autopsy upon the remains of the murdered man, he had imposed the task upon the medical examiner from another district, indicating that Dr. Gaylord had strenuous reasons for evading that duty.

Then the letter found by Steve Manley was submitted to the court, suggesting the strained relations which probably existed between the prisoner and the deceased; and at that point of the inquest, and amid the

breathless expectancy of the dense crowd, Celia Waldon was commanded to take the witness stand.

The face of the girl was like marble in its whiteness.

Though raised to her feet by her father, by whom she was accompanied, she seemed scarce able to stand.

It was evident to every observer, not that she was overcome by the appalling evidence already produced against the man she loved, but by that which she realized must fall from her own lips if she spoke the truth.

But as she tottered toward the witness stand, there came an interruption from the last person from whom an interruption was anticipated.

Dr. Howard Gaylord, who till then had sat silent and apparently unmoved, suddenly sprang to his feet, passionately waving aside his legal adviser, who was striving to check him, and, with a voice that rang like a trumpet through the crowded court-room, he cried, sternly:

"Let this go no further! I appeal to your honor, the court, this girl shall not be forced to testify against me!"

"Silence, prisoner!" shouted the crier.

"I will be silenced when I have had my say!" thundered Gaylord, with his head suddenly uplifted and a flood of crimson dying either cheek.

"This inquest shall go no further," he went on, in tones that rose above the swelling tumult and excitement. "This witness shall not be forced to outrage every sentiment of her girlish heart. I will prevent it by my own avowal. Your police and detectives are right, Judge Brady. *I was in Waldon Park on the night of the crime, and mine was the hand that killed Paul Henry!*"

It was not until this moment that Steve Manley succeeded in forcing his way to one of the doors of the crowded court-room,

and the voluntary confession of the physician fell upon his ears with an effort hardly to be imagined. It crumbled his every hope, ruined the theory on which he was working, and left him for the moment without a foot to stand on.

"Good Heavens! that does settle it!" he groaned, aloud, still hugging in his arms the bundle he had brought from Paul Henry's dwelling. "That does end it, for sure!"

In the midst of the tumultuous excitement which followed the physician's confession, however, Steve's dismay and agitation were wholly unobserved.

Dr. Gaylord still retained his position on the floor.

Celia Waldon had fallen half-fainting into the chair from which she had risen.

Under the forcible efforts of the court officers and the police, the tumult in the court-room was gradually subsiding; and, at the end of another minute, Judge Brady was able to make himself heard.

"Dr. Gaylord," he said, slowly, with his grave gaze now turned upon the physician's white face, "do you fully realize the import of your avowal?"

The physician drew up his splendid figure to its full height, and with a grandeur of which he was wholly unconscious, yet which imposed an immediate silence throughout the room, he answered, deeply:

"I realize my position perfectly, your honor."

"And you now confess to having killed Paul Henry?"

"I do, your honor! I alone am responsible for Paul Henry's death."

"Why have you deferred this confession until now?"

"Because I have yielded to the advice and appeals of others, rather than to the dictates of my own judgment and conscience. I repeat, your honor, I alone am responsible for

the killing of Henry, and I now am ready to suffer the penalty."

Judge Brady's grave countenance softened slightly.

Amid a silence so profound that a pin might have been heard to fall, he asked slowly:

"Are there any extenuating circumstances, Dr. Gaylord?"

"I will answer any questions which your honor may be inclined to ask," replied the physician, simply.

Though he voluntarily had confessed his own transgression, it now was equally apparent that he shrank from voluntarily exposing the sins of others.

Judge Brady drew himself up in his chair, and bent forward to rest his arm on his desk.

"What occasioned your visit to the Waldon grounds on the night in question, Dr. Gaylord?" he inquired.

"I went there in response to the letter which already has been submitted to the court."

"Did you meet Miss Waldon, as that letter intimates?"

"I did meet her, your honor."

"Did she give you any reasons for desiring the meeting?"

"She did, your honor."

"Will you state the reasons given you?"

"Yes, your honor," said Dr. Gaylord, with unchanging voice and countenance. "Miss Waldon and myself have been secretly betrothed for nearly a year. Our acquaintance has been rigidly opposed by her father. On the afternoon of the day in question, her father threatened to disinherit her unless she should consent to a marriage with Paul Henry, who that same afternoon had been invited by Mr. Waldon to wed his daughter."

"Do you know whether or not Paul Henry favored this proposal?"

"I was informed by Miss Waldon that he

did, who so had been informed by her father."

"Are these the facts of the case, Mr. Waldon?" asked Judge Brady, turning briefly to the banker.

Robert Waldon, like a man crushed by the results of his own arbitrary severity, sat with his head bowed in his hands. But he raised his ghastly face upon hearing the question, and faintly answered:

"Yes, they are the facts."

Judge Brady's eyes reverted to those of the prisoner.

"What more, Dr. Gaylord, did Miss Waldon say in explanation of her letter?"

"She said that her distress had led her to implore me to meet her that night, that I might at once be informed of the unexpected emergency which had arisen, and which she feared might require decisive if not hasty action on her part. In a word, your honor, she wanted to learn if my home was open to her, in event that her own was closed against her. Your honor, I gave her the assurance she desired."

"Under what circumstances did you encounter Paul Henry?"

"While conversing with Miss Waldon," replied the physician; "I suddenly heard him address me. I at once suspected that our meeting had been watched by him, and in my anger and resentment I scarce heard what he said. I think he ordered me out of the grounds, or made some other arrogant if not scurrilous remark. I already was much exercised by what I heard from Miss Waldon, and when I turned and saw the man who, at her father's instigation, was willing to come between us, I answered his words with a blow. It was a blow given in a moment of intense passion, your honor, and the unfortunate recipient was felled to the ground."

"What followed, Dr. Gaylord?"

"Instantly regretting my hasty act, I knelt beside him in the darkness, intending to make such reparation as became me, when, to my intense dismay and horror, I found him apparently lifeless."

"Continue, sir."

"Distracted by the awful discovery, and scarce responsible for my actions, I hastened with Miss Waldon from the fatal spot, and sent her into her home. I then returned to my own dwelling."

"Did you make no further examination of the victim of your assault?"

"I did, your honor. Long after midnight I returned to the spot, and found the man lying dead where I had left him. There was nothing I then could do, unless I had done what I now am doing; but I deferred that for divers reasons."

"Anything more, Dr. Gaylord?"

"I do not feel that I can add anything at present to the confession I now have made, your honor. I make it a little tardily, perhaps; but, perhaps, not less voluntarily than if made within the hour of the crime. Your honor, I repeat once more, I alone am responsible for Paul Henry's death."

As the last deeply-spoken words fell from Dr. Gaylord's lips, he gravely bowed to the court, and quietly resumed the chair from which he so impulsively had risen only a few minutes before.

Not a sound broke the silence that followed, and which lasted for nearly a minute.

To many there the interval seemed more like an hour, so freighted was it with the awful possibilities hanging upon the silent deliberation of the grave-visaged jurist upon the bench.

At the end of that minute Judge Brady broke the silence.

"The court," he said, slowly, and with profound solemnity, "will at the proper time make a thorough examination of the evi-

dence in this case. Under the circumstances, the court has no alternative but to find the prisoner guilty, and to order his detention in custody."

Dr. Gaylord bowed slightly, but the expression of his fine, grave countenance did not change by so much as a shadow on hearing the decree of the court.

Found guilty through his own confession.

Found guilty upon the testimony of police and detectives.

Found guilty under circumstances which seemed to admit of neither doubt nor hope of the contrary.

What wonder that Steve Manley was for the time staggered by this utterly unexpected turn of affairs.

CHAPTER VI.

STEVE PUTS HIS THEORY ON PAPER.

With the bundle of blood-stained bandages under his arm, Steve gazed helplessly across the court-room after the inquest was ended, until Dr. Gaylord was led out by the way he had come. Then the crowd began to surge toward the corridors and stairways, and Steve was born along with the others like a chip with the tide.

"Look out dere, hang you! What's der matter wid your glims? Can't you see I have got a bad duke?"

Hoarse, bitter and resentful, the remonstrance broke from a ruffian who was being jostled by the crowd and vainly striving to protect from injury the thickly-bandaged hand he still was carrying in a sling.

The voice reached Steve's ears, and the mere sound of it, and the glimpse he got of the hard, desperate face among those of the pushing crowd, were enough to revive the courage of the young detective, and renew that determination which briefly had been shaken by the physician's confession.

"That man Rohan again!" was the thought

that flashed through his mind. "There must be something in my theory, or that fellow would not constantly be turning up with an interest in this case."

"By the great horn spoon, I'll not let go of my idea, despite Dr. Gaylord's confession. I will see if I can get a word with him, and then I'll make my report to Chief O'Mara. Either I am a lunkhead, or I now have got a report worth making. And I'll make it, too, even if I get the laugh for my pains."

As if in encouragement of his renewed determination, success crowned Steve's immediate attempt to see Dr. Gaylord. He found one of the detectives from headquarters, by whom Steve was known, and he influenced one of the court officers to procure him a brief interview with the physician, who then was waiting in a side room before his removal to the prison.

Dr. Gaylord smiled faintly on seeing him, and kindly held out his hand.

"Good-morning, Steve," he said, gravely. "What are you doing here?"

"I'd like to whisper a word or two with you, doctor, if I may," Steve softly explained.

The physician at once drew aside from the persons with whom he had been talking, among whom were Celia Waldon and her father, the latter now so humiliated and remorseful that his enmity for the physician was entirely overcome.

"Have you called to say good-by to me, Steve?" smiled Dr. Gaylord, when they were alone.

"No, sir, not that," Steve softly exclaimed, shaking his head. "But I think you've made a mistake, sir."

"No, Steve, I guess not. Under the circumstances a confession was best, though many urged me to the contrary."

"But I don't mean that, sir, either," whispered Steve, with nervous eagerness. "I

say, doctor, would you mind telling me if it was very dark that night?"

"Do you mean when I encountered Paul Henry?"

"Yes, sir, that's what I mean."

"Yes, Steve, it was quite dark. We were under the trees near the Trust building."

"Was it so dark you couldn't see the man's face, doctor?"

"Well, not plainly, Steve, surely," replied Dr. Gaylord.

"Were you dead sure it was Henry, sir, when you struck him, and when you looked and found him knocked out?"

An expression of grave surprise had risen over Dr. Gaylord's pale face.

"Good Heavens, Steve, why do you ask me this?" he said, softly. "There can be no doubt of the identity of the man. No, I cannot say that I was positively certain at the time of the encounter, for I was much excited, yet the man certainly must have been Paul Henry. You know I returned only an hour or two later, and found him lying just where I had left him. I recognized him then, Steve, and I am satisfied that he was the man I encountered earlier."

"Mebbe you're right, Dr. Gaylord," admitted Steve.

But all the while he doubted it.

"I guess there is no question about it, Steve," rejoined the physician.

"Still, I'd like it if you would say nothing about my having asked you these questions."

"Very wen, Steve; I will say nothing about it."

Though he smiled gravely and again shook Steve by the hand, he did not dream of what was actuating the latter, nor of the remarkably clever work he was doing in his behalf.

Having learned what he wished, Steve next hastened to the police headquarters and the office of Chief O'Mara.

There he met with a disappointment.

Chief O'Mara had left town immediately after the inquest, and was not expected to return before evening.

"That means no report to him before tomorrow morning," groaned Steve. "Meantime, those two duffers may make their escape and—no, I'm blessed if they shall! At least, not before I have had out my little round with them!"

"I'll leave Chief O'Mara my report on paper, and then I'll continue the work on my own hook."

Having deposited his bundle in a corner of the chief's office, Steve hastened to procure a sheet of paper, and at one of the inspectors' desks in the general officers' room he made out the following report:

"May 13th, 12.30 P. M.

"Official Report of Detective Stephen Manley.

"To CHIEF ROGER O'MARA:

"There are two bad men, one named Rohan, the other named Dumfrie, down in the Boyd house, on V—— street. I have been shadowing both of them since yesterday, and now am going down there in disguise to see if I can discover what their little game has been.

"Both of these men were in Paul Henry's residence either on the night of the murder or the night before, and their actions are very suspicious. They were hanging about outside of the fence when Henry's body was found, and Rohan questioned me as to what you had discovered. When I left them that morning, I heard Rohan say to the other: 'That's what comes of a crooked duffer giving a square gun the chilly mit.'

"I shadowed both men to the Boyd House, where they now are located. Rohan's left hand evidently is badly injured, and he carries it in a sling. In the range in Henry's kitchen I found a lot of blood-stained bandages which he had removed from his hand, and he stole half of a sheet from one of Henry's beds with which to make new ones. You'll find the other half of the sheet, also

the soiled bandages, in the bundle which I have left in your office. If you will have the man arrested, and compare the portion of sheet with the sling and bandages he now is wearing, you will find that I am right.

"I think Dr. Gaylord has made a blunder, and invited his own arrest by it. I think he struck some other man, most likely Dobbs, who now is mysteriously missing. You will remember that Dobbs was the watchman that night, and next morning that he had his neck muffled up as if injured. He now is missing, and I think he has got a bat in his belfry, which is quite empty when it's at its best.

"I don't know yet what game Henry may have been up to with these two ruffians, Rohan and Dumfrie, but I now am going to find out. They are two very tough characters. Should they discover my intentions and do me up, Chief O'Mara, will you please see that they get all that's coming to them for it. Respectfully submitted,

"Detective Stephen Manley."

This was Steve's first attempt at making an official report, and it was written in much haste and excitement; hence its failings may be overlooked.

Having sealed it in an envelope, he addressed it to Chief O'Mara and left it on the latter's desk.

CHAPTER VII.

STEVE TAKES A LONG CHANCE.

A man by the name of Maguire ran the Boyd house, and the most profitable part of it, in fact the only part that warranted its existence at all, was its bar and lunch tables. From this combination, which occupied nearly the entire street floor, Maguire derived the means for a much better living than he enjoyed. Yet the upper floors of the miserable resort boasted of a few ill-kept rooms, usually rented to one or more equally miserable tenants.

It had the reputation of not only being a dive, but also a favorite retreat of fugitives

from the law, and after the early hours of any evening one would have had to seek far and wide for a more noisy and desperate gang than that which haunted Maguire's place on the river front.

An hour or more after Steve left his official report on Chief O'Mara's desk, Maguire gazed over his bar at a shabby youngster who had just entered, and whose aspect, walk and general characteristics were decidedly those of a youthful vagabond of the city type.

"I say, Maguire, would yer give a feller a job?" he asked, with a voice and slang which spoke well for Steve's cleverness as a personator.

"I've been slinging beer for Leary down on the point for a week back, while his son Jim was on his booze," Steve quickly added, before a refusal could be made. "But I'm t'rowed out now Jim's back, and I'm on me uppers. I'll work for nuthin'; only a bite to eat and corner to sleep in after closing. What d'ye say, Mr. Maguire? Will ye gimme a try?"

As it fortunately happened, Mr. Maguire was at that very time in need of help to serve his table trade in the busy hours, and Steve's offer was by far too good to be unworthy his consideration.

"Was ye working for Leary, did ye say?" he demanded, thrusting his red head over the bar to peer at Steve more closely.

"Sure I was, Mr. Maguire. All last week."

"Phat was yer doing?"

"Slinging beer most of the time, and waiting on the push."

"Be yer good around the tables?"

"That's me best holt, sir. I'm quick, and I'm not afeared of work."

"Bedad, I'll give yer a try!" cried Maguire, approvingly.

This was all that Steve wanted, and he was more than clever enough to hold such a job after getting it.

Evening found him busily engaged between the bar and the dozen or more tables which the low resort afforded, and displaying an activity and interest which led Maguire to think that he had indeed made a lucky find.

Before the evening rush of trade began, however, Steve had found an opportunity to take another step in the design then engaging him. While Maguire was at his supper, the young detective had stolen out by the rear door of the long bar-room, and, after climbing two flights of uncarpeted stairs, he had succeeded in locating the room then rented by the two ruffians.

It was a dismal back room, containing a single wide bed, a couple of chairs and a bureau. The window looked out upon a narrow rear court, with the pavements fully forty feet below.

Up to that time he had seen neither of the ruffians about the house nor in the bar-room, but by a little artful questioning he had learned from Maguire that they had gone out upon the street only a short time before, and that they had engaged their room with him for a week.

Finding the door of the room unlocked, Steve ventured to enter and look the place over, with a view of his subsequent requirements.

"If I can scare them into a game of talk," he shrewdly reasoned; "I may be able to get the information I am after. It is worth a try, at all events; and if they show signs of lighting out after I alarm them, I easily can make sure of their arrest."

It was nearly nine o'clock before Rohan and his companion returned to the house, and they took seats at one of the tables in the bar-room, and ordered two glasses of beer and something to eat. Neither saw in Steve Manley any likeness to the youth Rohan had accosted on the morning following

the murder, and Steve waited until they had finished eating and had ordered another round of drinks, before he got down to work.

He took a time when the business eased up a trifle, and when the noisy demands of those at the tables were well supplied. Then he stepped back of the chair in which Rohan was seated opposite his companion, and bent over to wipe off the bare table, and said softly in the ruffian's ear, as if giving him a friendly warning:

"Say, boss, you two guns better keep under cover for a time!"

Dumfrie did not hear what had been said to Rohan, but the latter started as if stung. He turned with an ugly frown to look at Steve, and seemed to read in his significant expression that only a friendly service was intended, and his own grim face relaxed a trifle.

"What d'yer mean, kid?" he growled, scarce above his breath.

Steve warningly shook his head, and kept on wiping the table.

"I dunno what your graft is," he replied, in a whisper; "but two o' the fly coppers from headquarters were in here just before dark, and hung around for an hour."

"To-night?"

"Not more'n an hour ago," nodded Steve. "They boozed up at the next table, and I caught onto 'em through hearing what they said."

"What's all this about?" Dumfrie suspiciously demanded, now leaning over the table.

"Shut up!" growled Rohan, with a furious scowl. "What did yer hear 'em say, kid?"

"As how they were looking for a gun with a bad hand, him and another one. Seeing you with your duke tied up, and only his jags with you, I thought mebbe 'twas you they wanted, and I'd tip yer off to lay low in case I was right."

Steve not only looked the part he was playing, but he was also carrying it with such skill that both of the ruffians, who now were deeply interested, were without a suspicion of his duplicity.

"Are yer sure they was detectives, kid?" demanded Dumfrie, who appeared the more disturbed of the two.

"Do yer think I'm a chump?" asked Steve, with a sneer of disdain. "Of course they was detectives. I knowed one of 'em by sight, as far as that goes, and the game of talk they were putting up on the quiet showed plain enough what they were."

"Was you waiting on 'em?" growled Rohan, over whose grim face a more desperate look had been steadily rising.

"Sure I was waiting on 'em," nodded Steve. "That's how I twigged what they were saying."

"They're not about here now, are they?"

"Not for an hour or more."

"Did they ask yer any questions?"

"If they had, 'twould been a waste of time and breath," said Steve, significantly. "I'd not have given 'em a pointer on their lives, for I don't love 'em enough for that. But they didn't ask me nuthin', nor the boss, for I kept me lamps on 'em from the start."

"What did yer hear 'em say, kid?"

"As to how they were after two coveys for some kind of a job I couldn't quite get onto."

"What was they shooting off the yarn in here for?"

"They just met outside, d'ye see, and one of 'em was telling the other what his lay was. But I couldn't get it all."

"Tell what yer got," growled Rohan, impatiently.

"Him as did the talk said as how he wanted the two guns for a job up in a crib on Bellefield avenue."

"For cracking der joint?"

"He didn't say de crib had been cracked,

but as how the two coveys was known to be there two or three nights ago. I piped him as close as I dared, d'ye see?"

"Did he say whose house?" demanded Rohan.

"I wan't dead sure, but I reckoned 'twas the bloke's house who had his light put out up that way by some doctor, who slugged him under the ear," explained Steve, imitating, as well as he was able, the low vernacular of the desperado to whom he was talking.

That Dumfrie was seriously alarmed was plainly manifest; and even Rohan, who was by far the more hardened and desperate man of the two, was considerably disturbed. He sat with his injured hand hugged close to his broad chest, and his right fist fiercely clenched upon the table; and only for a moment now and then did his sullen eyes leave Steve's face, when, moved by that impulse which predominates in a hunted man, he glanced out over the gathering of rough fellows by which the deep bar-room was thronged.

With voice lowered, and with a caution which at once betrayed to Steve the gravity of his apprehensions, Rohan next demanded:

"How'd the fly coppers know de two guns were in the house?"

"I heard 'em say they found some bloody rags in one of the stoves."

"I told you them wouldn't burn, and you'd better watch 'em," put in Dumfrie, glaring with evident disgust at his confederate. "Now it's money to marbles you've queered the whole business, and brought the cops upon our heels."

With a frown that would baffle description, Rohan leaned across the table and shook his clenched hand in the speaker's face.

"You keep your trap closed, do yer hear?" he said, in tones that were shaken through and through with intense passion. "I am

doing the talking with this kid, and you keep out of it. Don't you tell me I've brought the coppers on yer, or I'll put yer out in a way that will keep yer still."

"I was only thinking we'd best make a quick sneak while we can," growled Dumfrie, humbled by the other's ferocity.

"You can think as much as you like, but don't think out loud," retorted Rohan, reverting to Steve.

"D'ye know, kid, if the coppers knew we wuz here?"

"I reckon they didn't," replied Steve. "They were only on a lay to find you, and I thought I'd tip you off."

"I'll not forget it. Did they say if they found anything else?"

"I heard 'em say something about a sheet stole off a bed," continued Steve; "the which had been torn up, and only a part of it left in a closet. That's about all I heard, pard, and I think that's about all they knew."

"Do ye know where my room is?" asked the ruffian.

"I can find out," answered Steve, quickly.

"It's on the second floor back, nigh the corner."

"I know, now."

"And if these two elbows show up again, I want you to come on the quiet and tell me."

"I'll do that, only you mustn't give me away if you get pinched."

"Do I look like a gun as would give a pal away?" demanded Rohan, going down into his pocket.

Then he drew out several pieces of silver and thrust them into Steve's hand, and the latter nodded significantly, and said:

"You can count on me. I'll keep my eyes open, and if the duffers show up in here again, I'll let you know."

Rohan nodded approvingly, and leaned over the table to whisper for several minutes to his companion, upon which it became very

evident that a serious dissension was arising between them.

Steve took the opportunity to move away, and, a moment later, he was hanging about the rear door of the noisy room. Watching for a chance when no one should observe his movements, he suddenly slipped into the back entry and darted up the stairs.

He fully realized the terribly desperate character of these men against whom he was working, and that, if his treachery was discovered, his life would be worth scarce a pin's fee, yet he did not for a moment shrink from the danger, nor from executing the design he shrewdly had planned.

Making sure that he was not observed in either of the dimly-lighted entries, he hurried up the two flights of stairs and entered the back room.

It then was as dark as a negro's pocket, but Steve already had looked the place over and shaped his course.

The room offered no concealment but a closet, and beneath the bed, and Steve chose that which seemed to him the least hazardous.

Dropping upon his hands and knees he crept under the bed, which was pushed close against the wall on one side, and stretched himself flat upon the floor.

Lying there with breathing hushed, and with his heart throbbing so hard against his ribs that it quite alarmed him, Steve awaited the approach of the two ruffians, whom he knew would soon seek their room for a discussion of their situation.

It was by this daring and desperate strategy that the young detective aimed to secure a complete case against them.

Men of years and experience, even, would have shrunk from what Steve Manley's courageous ambition had dared.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN PERIL OF HIS LIFE.

Steve was not obliged to wait very long for the culmination of his design, which was all the more to his fancy under the existing circumstances.

At the end of five minutes the sound of heavy feet were heard ascending the stairs,

and the door of the room was presently kicked open by a heavy boot, and the grim and sullen growl of Mr. Rohan broke the dismal silence.

"Strike a light!" he commanded, with an oath. "Strike a light, and then I'll settle this business with yer for good and all. You've got no sand, Waddy. You give me a pain in the side. Strike a light, I say!"

"He wouldn't do a thing to me if he found me here!" said Steve to himself, quite alarmed for a moment by the furious ill-humor displayed by Rohan. "It would be a case of all up with Steve Manley."

Dumfrie had some difficulty in finding a match in his dilapidated pocket, but after several minutes, which were enlivened by the unceasing maledictions of Rohan, he succeeded in locating the desired article, and presently the feeble rays of a smoky oil lamp were shed upon the scene.

"Shut the door!" cried Rohan, throwing himself into a chair near the wall. "Shut the door an' listen to me."

"Ain't I listening?" retorted Dumfrie, with a growl of resentment. "Don't you think you can give me a bluff with yer ugly tongue, for I'm not afeared of any man with only a single duke. I'm not crying baby, but I want to do the thing what's best to be done. And a quick sneak is the safest, I say, if what that kid told you was the trut'."

"Der truth!" growled Rohan, glaring scornfully at his confederate. "What else could it be but der trut'? How could that kid have known anything about our being in the house of that infernal crooked duffer, and about der rags I shoved in the stove, only if some o' the coppers were here as he said. Of course 'twas der trut'!"

"And what der ye mean to do about it? Are yer going to stay here and be took like a rat in a trap?" Dumfrie sullenly demanded.

"We're a long ways from being took," retorted Rohan, with a contemptuous sneer. "The coppers ain't onto it that we are here; and if they was, and were to run us in, they'd have no case against us fur being in a man's house after the man took us in there."

"Ain't we both mugged in the picture gallery?" cried Dumfrie, with augmented bitterness.

"What if we are?"

"Wouldn't they get on to that? And how long before they'd know that we are the two that broke jail in Cleveland, when you got the bullet in your duke?"

"That's the chance we must both of us take," replied Rohan, bluntly. "And it's a better chance than sneaking away from here, and giving 'em reason to pull us up on der road, like as if we had been up to something crooked and were trying to give 'em the slip."

"I'm not so dead sure o' that, Bill."

"Well, I am! It's a blamed sight better fur me to go back to Cleveland and do out my time there, than to be run in here in Pittsburg fur puttin' out the light o' the crooked duffer who throwed us down."

"That does settle it!" Steve exultantly cried within himself. "I've had the case dead to rights, after all, and that was the man who killed Henry."

"But you're taking the chance of their putting the crime on you by staying here," growled Dumfrie, by no means convinced by Rohan's sullen argument.

"How can they put it on me, you fool, since der sawbones has confessed to doing der job?" demanded Rohan, contemptuously. "The evidence is all against him, not against me."

But Mr. Dumfrie dismally shook his head.

"They have ways o' doing things, Bill, and mighty queer ways," said he; "the which we guns don't know much about."

"But they can't do it!"

"It's easy enough to say, they can't; but still I say, they might!"

"You're turning yaller agin!" cried Rohan, with another outburst of resentful disdain. "How could they show dat we came here like total strangers, and run across that duffer all by accident?"

"Still, I say they might show it."

"And they might not! I'm taking that chance sooner'n take a worse one. An' how can they show that the duffer took us to his own house, and kept us hid fur two days and nights, so's we could help him in his little game? They can't show that since the duffer's dead."

"I don't say they can show it, Bill," Dumfrie now growled impatiently. "I'm only saying they might be able to show it—an' you know well enough what that means!"

"You're afeared of a shadow."

"No, I'm not."

"Yer don't see the case in the right light. They'd have to show a motive fur the crime, an' how 'twas done; and they can't do that. How can they show that the duffer let us into the bank by the side door that night, for us to knock him out and put him to sleep, as if der job was a square deal and the crib had been decently cracked? How can they show all that?"

"They're sure to find he was short in the accounts he was keeping," snarled Dumfrie, discursively; "and that will give 'em a pointer as to the motive, if not the whole blooming game."

"You are very right it will!" thought Steve, triumphantly.

"But they can't show that we were there," protested Rohan, maintaining his argument with all the ugly persistency of a man convinced of its stability.

"They can't show that the old crooked duffer went back on us, and turned us down when he found he had a chance to fix himself up by marrying der banker's daughter!" he continued, forcibly.

"Mebbe they can't show that, Bill; but the case is bad, infernally bad, at the best I can see it."

"And they can't show," persisted Rohan, "that I slugged him in a way to put out his light, when I found he'd given us der chilly mit, and locked der vault door so's we couldn't do der job on our own hook, since we was in there so easy."

"They can't show any o' that, d'y'e see; nor how we lugged der cussed stiff out by der side door an' left it on the ground, so's there'd be no evidence of its having been done inside. They can't show any of it, Waddy, when it comes down to der fine thing; and der confession of der sawbones will be more'n enough to clear us of having any hand in der duffer's death. That ought to be plain enough to you, Waddy."

It was equally plain that Bill Rohan was very much averse to being deserted at just

this time by his confederate in the crime which he had just elucidated in his uncouth fashion, and that he was making this sustained argument chiefly with a hope of preventing the threatened rupture of their relations.

But again Waddy Dumfrie doubtfully shook his head.

"You may be right about it, Bill," he said, grimly; "but I'm cursed if I can see it in the same way that you do. If you hadn't put out der bloke's light——"

"What's der use of saying if?" Rohan furiously interrupted. "Meet der thing as she is, not as she might a been! What der yer mean to do?"

"I say the best thing is a quick sneak, while we can get away," repeated Dumfrie, still clinging to the opinion he had formed the moment he discovered the danger of remaining in Pittsburg.

This response, which was directly opposed to his own wishes, only served to anger Rohan the more.

"Then you mean to give me der chilly mit, the same as the other duffer did, do you?" he demanded, with an ominous suppression of passion.

"No, I'm not giving you any frozen hand," was the quick retort. "There ain't any rope on you, and you can come along with me, so be it you like."

"Yer face shows you don't want me!" cried Rohan, with his steadfast eyes flaming brighter and brighter, and never leaving those of the man opposite.

"You're wrong in that!"

"No, by thunder, I'm right! It sounds in your voice, and I know how you feel. You think I'm like to be turned down fur this job, and you fear that you'll be taken along with me."

"We'll both be taken, Bill, if we stay here."

"And you mean to quit me and try to make off alone, that's what you mean!" cried Rohan, suddenly starting to his feet and striding nearer his hearer. "You're a dirty duffer, and I'll not stand for it. The next I know, you'll be on a lay to turn me down, and clear yourself by splitting the whole business."

With an uglier look in his eyes under this

accusation, Dumfrie leaped up and started for the door.

But Rohan was too quick for him, and with a bound he had thrust the man back, and stood with his broad shoulders against the closed door, and his powerful figure preventing the other's egress.

Steve decided that the affair was becoming deucedly warm.

But it then was cool and comfortable compared with the conditions a moment later.

With his flaming eyes fixed on the angry face of the man he now confronted, Rohan furiously demanded between his set teeth:

"D'y mean that you're going?"

"Aye, that's what I mean!" cried Dumfrie, firmly.

"Will yer go without me?"

"You can do as you like, Rohan, but I'm going! Pittsburg is now too warm for me."

"D'y mean——"

"I mean what I say!" cried Dumfrie, with an outburst of anger which till then had been contained. "I mean what I say! I'm going!"

"And you'll give me der shake, eh? When I'm——"

"You can take it that way, or any way you like, if——"

"Take that, instead, you duffer!"

And with a rage he no longer held in check, Rohan suddenly sprang forward and dealt his confederate a blow that lifted him clear of the floor, and sent him crashing bodily upon the bed behind him.

His fall was accompanied by the loud snapping and cracking of breaking slats. The bedstead yielded under the ruffian's weight, and the mattress, bedding and man, came down in indescribable confusion fairly upon the figure of the startled and dismayed youth beneath them.

Instantly a cry, not of resentment of the blow, but of sudden and overwhelming amazement, broke from Dumfrie's lips.

Before Rohan could repeat the blow, which in his rage he seemed about to do, the fallen ruffian scrambled out of the confusion, crying hoarsely:

"Let up! let up, Bill, slit my gizzard, if there isn't a man under the bed!"

"What der yer say?"

"Under the bed—there's a man under the bed!"

"Lift it up, then!" cried Rohan, furiously. "Can't yer see I've only got one hand?"

"One was enough!" retorted Dumfrie, violently throwing off the mattress and bedding. "You see I was right. We're already run down—oh, devil's luck! It's that kid!"

"Shut up! See if anybody is in the entry! Don't you tumble? Der kid is working wid der coppers! See if any one's in der entry!"

The face of the ruffian had undergone a mighty change. He instantly grasped the significance of Steve's presence there; and, in place of rage, his desperate face now evinced a vengefulness and resolution sufficient to have appalled the stoutest heart that ever beat in a detective's breast.

"Come out here!" he hissed, as soon as Dumfrie had reclosed the door. "Come out, I say!"

Without a word, Steve crawled from under the broken slats, and took a position in the floor.

"Look out for the door, Waddy," growled Rohan. "Don't give him a chance to speak. Now, kid, don't open your mouth till I say! If yer do, I'll close it for keeps."

Steve fell back a step or two from the man, whose very fury was only the more terrible because of its quietude, and paused only when his hips touched the bureau back of him.

But he did not speak. The look on Rohan's face told him, louder even than his words, that his threat would be executed with a celerity that would render vain any outcry he then could make.

With his voice scarce raised above a whisper, Rohan came closer and demanded:

"What were you doing here? Are you working with the coppers?"

"Am I to speak now?" returned Steve, in tones that shook despite him.

"Aye, but in a whisper."

"Yes, I am working with the detectives," admitted Steve, taking his best chance to escape with his life.

The ruffian's face did not change. All the worst part of his nature was already pic-

tured there. He nodded slowly, with his fiery gaze never leaving the boy's face, and said, grimly:

"I ought to have known it. So you're a fly young copper, are you?"

"What good to deny it?" returned Steve, pulling himself together to face the music with as bold a front as possible. "Yes, I'm one of Chief O'Mara's force of men."

"Men, eh? D'ye hear that, Waddy?"

"Aye, I hear it. I reckon, now, you'll think it's a case of sneak."

"You're right, Waddy, and I was wrong. See here, kid, what do the other coppers know about this case?"

"They know all about it," said Steve, shortly.

He knew that Rohan was aiming to discover just where he should stand in case he should silence him, and Steve was at once shrewd enough to chance escaping with his life by deceiving them.

"If they know all about it, what were you here for?" demanded Rohan, sharply.

"To make dead sure we were right," Steve boldly answered. "The chief knows all about you, Mr. Rohan, and if you do me up for this, you'll only have the more to answer for."

"The penalty's the same for two as for one!" exclaimed the ruffian, with frightful significance. "And I'd croak easier, knowing I'd not let a kid like you do me up un-punished in a way like this. D'ye hear what he says, Waddy?"

"Sure, I hear!"

"And what do yer say?"

"I say what I said before. It's a case of making a sneak, or we'll be cornered here like rats in a trap."

"Look out again! See who's in the entry."

Mr. Dumfrie softly opened the closed door and peered out into the dimly-lighted corridor.

"There's no one in the way, Bill."

"Are yer sure?"

"Dead sure!"

As quick as a flash, Bill Rohan swung round and caught Steve by the throat, twining his injured arm around him, and holding him as if in a vise.

Dumfrie instantly suspected the ruffian's intention, and sprang forward with a cry of alarm.

"Let up, Bill!" he exclaimed, hoarsely. "What are you going to do?"

"Get even with this kid before I go! Open der window!"

"No, no!"

"By thunder, yes!" cried Rohan, with murder both in eyes and voice. "He heard der whole story when I told it. His testimony alone would convict me. If I toss him from der window that'll end him, and they can't prove he didn't fall out himself. Open der window!"

"Bill——"

But Rohan silenced him with an oath too terrible to inscribe. Despite his struggles, the ruffian raised Steve clear off the floor, and swinging around to confront his ghastly confederate, he cried once more:

"Open der window! Open it, or I'll throw him through it!"

CHAPTER IX.

A RESCUE.

It was well along in the evening before Chief O'Mara returned to his office at the police headquarters.

On entering the commodious room, one of the first things to meet his gaze was the letter which Steve Manley had left lying upon his desk. Quickly breaking the seal, he opened the folded sheet within and began to read.

The smile which at first appeared around his fine dark eyes slowly vanished; then, into every feature of his face there gradually stole an expression which pen could not easily describe.

Before he had read the last line his broad experience told him, not the mistakes which Dr. Gaylord and his own detectives had very naturally made, but rather the extraordinary

bit of work which the inexperienced writer of the note had accomplished.

He saw at once what Steve had failed to see—that Paul Henry might, indeed, have been short in his accounts, and in league with two ruffians to counterfeit a break and robbery of the Unity Trust that fateful night.

Suddenly throwing the letter down upon his desk, he swung round and hurriedly tore open the bundle which Steve had left lying in one corner.

The moment his stern eyes fell upon its contents, he started to his feet again and hastened toward the door.

"Do up that boy, eh?" he cried under breath, and with more emotion than he often displays. "We'll very soon see whether or not they will do him up!"

The inspectors who chanced to be in the outer office looked surprised at the expression on his face when he strode into their midst.

"Two of you come with me!" he cried, sharply, indicating with a wave of his hand the two desired. "Don't delay a moment."

Less than ten minutes later a carriage, driven furiously through the streets of Pittsburgh, pulled suddenly up at the curbing in front of the Boyd House, and Chief O'Mara and his officers sprang out.

A sudden, intense silence fell upon the crowded bar-room when they entered, and glasses hung poised midway to the lips of startled men.

"Maguire!" cried the chief, striding straight to the bar; "have you a man by the name of Rohan lodging here?"

"Yes, Chief O'Mara, I have!" cried Mr. Maguire, with polite humility.

"Do you know where he is at present?"

"Bedad, sir, I'm after thinking he's up in his room."

"Where is his room?"

"Two floors up, sir."

"Front or back?"

"One o' the back rooms, sir, the one nearest the corner. I'll go along wid you and show—"

"You stay where you are!"

The tramp, tramp of the officers as they strode through the bar-room was the only sound that broke the awed silence.

Their tramp, tramp through the narrow entry and up the dimly-lighted stairways, fell more rapidly as they ascended.

On arriving at the break of the last stairway, Chief O'Mara momentarily halted, to ascertain the direction in which to turn.

Even while he stood there, a cry that was hoarse with fury and heavy with vengeful rage sounded from one of the nearest rooms.

"Open the window! Open it, or I'll throw him through it!"

This alone would have been enough to tell where help most was needed. With a single bound, Chief O'Mara reached the room from which the cry had sounded, and with a single violent blow he threw open the door.

A startling sight instantly met his gaze.

Waddy Dumfrie stood with both his arms stretched wide across the window, to prevent the crime by which Bill Rohan would forever have ended the career of Steve Manley, then hanging choked and nearly senseless in the brutal ruffian's arms.

It would be difficult, indeed, to fittingly describe what followed, and to depict the various results of the work which Steve Manley so cleverly had done, the amazement of all who heard the extraordinary story, the wonderment even of the court and the police at the strangely curious features of the case, the intense relief and gratitude of Dr. Gaylord and the girl who, like himself, had believed him guilty of a crime of which he was guiltless—to depict these features properly would require more than words alone.

Two days after the publication of the

truth through the columns of the press, there turned up at police headquarters, with an explanation to Chief O'Mara, the missing man in whose silence and absence the mystery of Dr. Gaylord's conduct was involved.

This man was half-witted Peter Dobbs.

In the darkness of that fatal night, recounting the story as he told it, he was dressed in his best, which had led to his being mistaken by the physician, and to his becoming the recipient of a blow which for a time had rendered him insensible. It had resulted from his having encountered Dr. Gaylord at the time of the latter's meeting with Celia Waldon, and in his mistaking them for intruders upon the place, and discourteously ordering them out of the grounds.

On the following day, when Paul Henry was found murdered Dobbs had assumed that the physician must have encountered Henry; and upon learning of the physician's arrest, he immediately had fled from the city for fear he should be compelled to testify to having seen him about the Trust building that night.

Two weeks after the arrest of Rohan and Dumfrie, the former died in his cell of blood-poisoning from his wounded hand. Before his death, however, he made a confession which cleared up those features of the case which still remained somewhat obscure.

It appeared that both he and Dumfrie had escaped from prison only a week previous to their meeting with Paul Henry in Pittsburg. As it afterwards appeared, the latter was seriously short in his accounts at the bank, and had employed these two ruffians to counterfeit a robbery in order to conceal the fact of his own defalcation.

It was arranged among them that the two men were to enter the bank by the side door that night, Henry voluntarily admitting them and leaving it to be inferred that Robert Waldon had neglected to lock the door at the time of his departure, a short time before.

Paul Henry, however, had learned only that evening that another avenue of escape from ruin unexpectedly was open for him through the marriage proposed by Waldon; and he had, on the arrival of the ruffians, peremptorily refused to execute the original plan.

This so enraged Rohan that, when Henry started with alarm and succeeded in securing the vault door, the ruffian felled him with a slung shot, giving him the blow that caused his death.

At Dumfrie's suggestion they subsequently had removed the body to the grounds outside, as its discovery there would be less likely to awaken suspicion against men of their profession. They then had locked the side door with Henry's key and replaced the key in the latter's pocket. This occurred, of course, between the time of Dr. Gaylord's encounter with Dobbs and the hour when the physician returned to make his examination of the man he found dead upon the ground. In the meantime, Dobbs had recovered from the blow given him and departed.

By his death Rohan escaped the usual punishment for the crime he had committed; but Dumfries received a life sentence, which he is now serving.

Two months after the release of Dr. Gaylord he was married to Celia Waldon—with her father's consent.

On the morning after his rescue in the Boyd House, Steve Manley told to Chief O'Mara the entire story, as it had appealed to him. The chief heard him to the end, and then gravely observed, yet with a rather quizzical look in his earnest eyes:

"I believe I told you, Steve, that if I found you were not adapted to detective work your former situation would be open to you."

Steve looked up at him with a most ludicrous expression of dismay.

"Yes, Chief O'Mara, you did," he replied; "but I hope it's not so bad as that, sir!"

"Bad, Steve?" and Chief O'Mara smiled and beckoned for him to come nearer. "No, not bad, Steve!"

Then he laid one hand on the young man's shoulder, and turning back his coat, he smilingly secured to the lapel of Steve Manley's vest—a detective's badge!

THE END.

Next week's SHIELD WEEKLY (No. 18) will contain "Called Down; or, Steve Manley in a Desperate Strait."

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